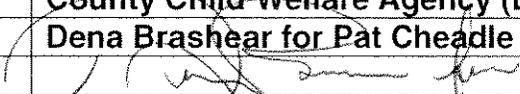
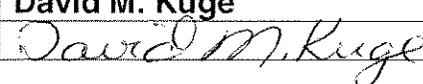


SIP Cover Sheet

California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan	
County:	Kern County
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency	Kern County Department of Human Services
Period of Plan:	June 2009 through May 2011
Period of Outcomes Data:	(1) Quarter ending March 2009
Date Submitted:	June 30, 2010 (2)
County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan	
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care	
Submitted by:	County Child Welfare Agency (Lead Agency)
Name:	Dena Brashear for Pat Cheadle
Signature:	
Submitted by:	
Submitted by:	County Chief Probation Officer
Name:	David M. Kuge
Signature:	

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SIP Narrative

Assembly Bill (AB) 636, Chapter 678, Statutes of 2001, enacted the Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability Act of 2001. This law required the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to establish the California Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS). The purpose of COAS is to strengthen the accountability system used to monitor and assess the quality of services provided on behalf of maltreated children. The COAS is built upon a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement, public reporting of program outcomes, and the compliance with related federal outcomes. Key components of the COAS include: data analysis, peer review, self-assessment and planning. Counties are required to complete the COAS on a triennial schedule.

Kern first completed the COAS process in 2004. FY 2007-2008 marked the beginning of Kern's second comprehensive COAS process. Child Welfare Services (CWS) data was analyzed in comparison to state and federal measures; GIS mapping was employed so that the data could be better understood and community specific needs could be better identified; and a Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) process was conducted in June 2007 and the County's Self Re-assessment was completed in February 2009.

During our County's Self Reassessment stakeholder groups were presented with CWS outcome data and then asked to identify and discuss current efforts, as well as efforts that are needed to further improve outcomes. The following stakeholder groups participated in the CSA process where they gave solutions for the SIP improvements:

- **Kern County Network for Children (KCNC) Governing Board.** Members: Directors of County departments, Kern County Board of Supervisors, Community-based organizations, community leaders, Kern Child Abuse Prevention Council Director, Juvenile Court judge, Director of First 5 Kern, and local business leaders. **Purpose:** Kern's Coordinating Council, policy board for children's services, and Planning Body for Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) funding.
- **Administrative Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC).** **Members:** Second tier managers from County departments and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, and the Director of the KCNC. **Purpose:** Share information, discuss success and barriers related to service integration, coordinate service planning efforts, and develop policy recommendations for KCNC consideration.
- **Administrative Coordinators Team (ACT).** Members: Family Resource Center and Community Collaborative Coordinators; Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment/Promoting Safe and Stable Families project managers, managers from Human Services,

Probation, Health and Mental Health; Differential Response project managers; representatives from First 5 Kern, and KCNC staff. **Purpose:** Identify service gaps and duplication, coordinate and integrate community driven services, and share information.

- **Child Advocacy Network (CAN).** Members: Chaired by the Kern County Child Abuse Prevention Council, this group includes a range of child advocates, such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the DHS, Family Resource Center Coordinators, Community-based organization representations, California State University, Bakersfield's (CSUB) MSW Program, KCNC staff, parent representative, as well as representatives from the Mental Health System of Care and Substance Abuse divisions. **Purpose:** Advocate on behalf of children and families regarding the issues that affect them most, and develop best practice recommendations for services for children and families at risk of abuse and neglect.
- **Group Home Coalition.** **Members:** Representatives from group homes throughout Kern County, placement officers/workers from Probation and DHS, Supervisors for DHS and Community Care Licensing, and Foster Youth Services (FYS). **Purpose:** Discuss, develop, and implement coordinated approaches to best meet the needs of Kern's highest need youth and improve educational outcomes and placement stability.
- **Foster Youth Services/Independent Living Program (FYS/ILP) Advisory Committee.** **Members:** Representatives from mental health, schools, Probation, DHS, CASA, Bakersfield College, FYS, Foster Family Agencies, CSUB, Housing Authority of Kern, and public health nursing. **Purpose:** Discuss, develop, and implement coordinated approaches designed to assist foster youth with preparing for aging out of the system, completing their education and/or job training programs, and becoming self-sufficient adults.
- **Children's Treatment and Recovery Services Committee.** **Members:** representatives from Mental Health, Foster Family Agencies, DHS, KCNC, Probation, schools, Kern's Behavioral Health Board, health, and community-based mental health provider agencies. **Purpose:** Improve upon the Children's System of Care through collaborative efforts and by providing an open forum for discussions and presentations that address the needs of children and their families.

Kern County utilized a Business Objects report to explore reasons for Kern's problem area of placement stability, especially for youth in care at least twenty four months. Case readings were done on eighty cases for clients with over four placements. A specialized unit read these cases looking at referrals for service to ILP, mental health services, contact with adult family members, sibling visits, goals for guardianship, services for relatives through Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP), links to

tutoring, links to mentors, and referrals for Individual Education Plans (IEP).

Kern County has implemented a Quality Assurance Unit that reads Child Welfare Services cases for adherence to regulations and policies, best practices, and documentation. A corrective action committee was also developed at this time and their charge is to develop a plan of correction in response to the QA findings.

Discussion of System Strengths County Self-Reassessment -- CWS

Kern County's Child Welfare Services system is embedded into an extensive integrated service delivery system that includes a continuum of informal and formal support services for children and families. Although the Kern County DHS and Probation Departments generate the data that serve as the measures for child welfare service outcomes, the services they provide are only two pieces to the complex puzzle surrounding keeping children safe, ensuring that their best interests are addressed first and foremost at all times, and that they are prepared to successfully transition into self-sufficient adults.

When presented with current CWS data, key stakeholder groups were quick to identify services and support that public and private agencies throughout Kern are providing, as efforts to improve key measures. While several needs were identified to improve measures, they primarily focused on current efforts and point to a clear need for funds to become available to expand the important, effective work that is currently being done. Kern's commitment to providing outcome driven services has made it possible to demonstrate the effectiveness of services provided, and the need to expand key initiatives such as Differential Response, the Early Intervention Program, and Foster Youth Services, substance abuse treatment, and Family Resource Center (FRC)-based informal support services, to name a few.

These positive findings are validated by the report that was presented by CWLA to the Kern County Board of Supervisors in June 2008. This report states, "[the] Kern County Department of Human Services has accepted ownership of demonstrated changes by instituting permanent structures and systems to sustain continuous improvement and in practices that promote child safety, well being and permanency."

Areas Needing Improvement

Current and anticipated state and federal budget cuts have made it difficult at best to sustain current service levels, reduce caseload sizes, and continue to fully meet the needs of Kern's increasing population. Funding to expand services that have demonstrated measurably improved outcomes is paramount, especially in remote areas of our large county.

Improvements to enhance existing services such as increased training, expedited referrals for children who need mental health assessments and services; and improved communication and collaboration between service providers, social workers, probation officers, foster parents/group homes, children and families will be implemented.

Areas for Further Exploration through Peer Quality Case Review

Placement stability for children in out-of-home care is an area for further exploration through the PQCR process. Strategies to further reduce the number of group home placements, increase the number of placement options and the supports available for special needs youth (ranging from medically fragile to sex offending youth), and increase permanency for youth so that they are better prepared to successfully transition to a self-sufficient adulthood need to be considered.

Summary and Recommendations – PQCR CWS

The PQCR process was greeted by our community partners and out of county social workers with enthusiasm. The Court focus group was productive in that the diversity of the group provided information from varying views on our families. A number of dominant themes evolved in the PQCR process:

- The relationship between the parent and the social worker is important to the timely reunification process.
- More inexpensive or free services are needed. Services are needed especially in outlying areas. Training on local and State resources is needed.
- A work group consisting of staff from DHS and Mental Health is in place to address increasing the timeliness and the frequency of services.
- Parents need encouragement by giving them positive feedback when goals are attained, such as, increasing visitation. Policy has been development to assure the consistency of what case plan goals must be met by parents receiving court ordered services as well as the application of consistent rewards.
- Transportation needs make visitation requirements hard to maintain.
- Individualized case plans should be planned with the family, the family reunification worker, the AB429 worker and court intake worker present. The documented use of Family Engagement Efforts needs to be implemented.

- Placement changes out of the child's community affect continuity of services and academic performance. The Department has had a number of "Taking Care of Business" days in different communities, whereby the Department supplies prospective foster parents most all of their licensing requirements in their community in one stop. The prospective foster parent is fingerprinted, certified in CPR, helped with the application, given a TB test, and receives foster parent orientation. Training and the home call are the only requirements still needed.

Process Summary and Recommendations – Probation

The purpose of the PQCR was to cultivate ideas from the guest panelists interviewing staff, staff being interviewed, and the other panels. The information was compiled, and presented in such a way that there was little chance for comments or ideas to be attributed back to one specific person. Hopefully, this allowed people to speak freely and generate some good ideas for progress.

Reunifying wards of the Court in out of home care with their families is, and should always be the first option, as long as that option is in the best interest of the child, family, and protection of society. Although held to similar standards and too often dealing with the same populations, dependency and delinquency placement cases take on different characteristics. A child becomes a dependent of the Court overwhelmingly due to no fault of their own, but rather because of parental cruelty, inability, or unwillingness to properly care for their child. A placement ward of the Court has been found to have committed a criminally delinquent act, coupled with an unsuitable home environment to which they may return.

Similarly, Social Workers and Placement Probation Officers have a variety of like tasks and duties, with different roles and guidelines to follow. One of the purposes of child social service agencies is to protect children from harm and ensure they are in the most appropriate environment, while probation agencies serve the Court by ensuring the orders of the Court are being carried out. In most probation agencies, Kern County Probation included, placement units make up only a small portion of the department's overall function. Therefore, the community by and large tends to categorize all Probation Officers as law enforcement oriented as opposed to social service oriented.

The subtle, but significant differences outlined in the previous two paragraphs provide the foundation for the major themes derived from Kern County Probation's PQCR.

One theme involved the implementation of a flexible work schedule. Currently placement officers work many overtime hours throughout the course of a work month. The reasons for this are many, but primarily come down to time spent on the road completing placement trips, attending collaborative meetings and

statewide trainings, and time spent completing paperwork and returning calls due to being absent on placement trips. Having the ability to work longer shifts, over the course of fewer days would allow officers the ability to complete their placement trips and job duties primarily within the time frames of a normal working day. In addition, it would increase officer's availability to both group home staff and families, as often times family members are not able to meet within the normal "eight to five" business day. This would further increase efforts to engage families in working towards family reunification within the time frames of a normal working day.

Resources, equipment and training both for the officers and for the families make up a second major theme. Goods and services available to youth and their families in out of home care through social service agencies are often times not available, or not known to be available to probation placement youth. Officers interviewed revealed a sense of frustration concerning this area, which is based on a lack of information. Access to more funding streams and job related trainings were indicated by officers interviewed. In addition, officers showed a need for additional support staff to lighten the paperwork involved, and a need for additional officers to lighten caseload sizes. Requests for tangible equipment such as: laptop computers with wireless access to case management systems in order to eliminate the need to record information multiple times, GPS devices, and portable communication devices, were also made.

Kern County Probation can take pride in the fact that several positive comments were made by staff being interviewed and panelists concerning overall staff communication with peers, and management. In addition, staff dedication to their assignment seemed apparent to the panelists based on staff responses, preparedness, professionalism, and overall demeanor.

In conclusion, the PQCR process for Kern County Probation appeared to be a positive one for all involved. At this point, information gained from this PQCR will be included in the Systems Improvement Plan. Probation will focus on the following areas of the Systems Improvement Plan:

- Identify and attend trainings related to engagement
- Encourage parental attendance in the "Parent Project" program and other local counseling options
- Develop contacts between agencies to facilitate information sharing
- Implement a new case management system to document information more accurately and efficiently.

The majority of Kern's goals in the SIP created in June 2007 have been completed therefore they will not be included in this document.

The CWSOIP allocation and the CWSOIP augmentation funding for FY 09/10 were spent on salaries and employee benefits (approximately 75%), and on

services to clients, including Emancipated Youth Services, Building Blocks, and Celebrating Families Program services. The CWSOIP II funding was utilized to support Differential Response services.

System Component Template

<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: S1.1 – No Recurrence of Maltreatment</p> <p>County's Current Performance: Kern County Child Welfare performed at 92.2% for October 2008-March 2009, whereas in July 2002, Kern was performing at 86.1%. The national standard is 95.2%, while California's performance is 92.8%. Kern County Probation does not receive or investigate suspected abuse. When minors are left in the home on probation, officers monitor the suitability of the residence and general welfare of the minor while conducting routine home and office visits as a part of supervising compliance with terms and conditions of Probation.</p> <p>For those minors on probation and out-of-home care, referrals are made to Child Protective Services (CPS) when there is suspected abuse or neglect. In Kern County, the Probation Department and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines each department's responsibilities when suspected abuse or neglect occurs against minors who are in out-of-home care.</p> <p>Improvement Goal 1.0 – Kern would like to improve this goal by 3% over the next three years.</p>	
<p>Strategy 1.1 – Search counties north and south of Kern for services. Due to the size of the county, services are not readily available for our clients in outlying areas; neighboring towns in other counties may offer services accessible to Kern's clients.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale¹ : Services in outlying areas were identified as a need in the PQCR and CSA for clients living near county borders who have no access to travel into Bakersfield.</p>
<p>1.1.1 Request a directory of services from each of the neighboring counties: Tulare, San Bernardino, Inyo, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Kings, and Los Angeles Counties for a directory of resources.</p> <p>1.1.2 Contact resource providers with sites near the County borders to identify whether Kern's clients access their services and whether their program standards are in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code.</p> <p>1.1.3 When resources meet compliance standards, certify the provider and issue a certificate of authorization to provide services to our clients and add to approved provider list in Resource Directory.</p>	<p>LA and Tulare Resource Directories available on-line. Completed July 2009.</p> <p>Completed July 2009 and ongoing. Per Policy, providers certified on as-needed bases at client's request.</p> <p>Began certifying providers in 2000 and ongoing. Resource Directory updated biannually with new and current providers</p>
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>Assigned to</p> <p>PSB and Foster Care Ombudsman</p> <p>Foster Care Ombudsman</p>

¹ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome.

System Component Template

Strategy 1.2 – Collaborate with community resources to ensure family stability and children’s safety.		Strategy Rationale ¹ : Clients who have continual follow up will potentially refrain from further abuse and /or neglect.	
Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to	Assigned to
<p>1.2.1 Refer clients to a resource that addresses the primary safety and risk factors.</p> <p>1.2.2 Hold quarterly resource fairs for staff to increase staff’s knowledge of community resources.</p> <p>1.2.3 Integrate the use of a Resource Referral Form to document the client’s engagement in accessing the agreed-upon services.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Created Sept 2007. Informal use began June 2009. Implementation as requiring the completion of the pilot of the case plan engagement tools by December of 2010.</p>	<p>PD’s, SSS’s and Social Service Workers in all CWS programs</p> <p>Case plan engagement Staff Development</p>	
<p>1.2.4 Create safety plans for clients who are determined to have safety factors per the Structured Decision Making Safety Assessment tool.</p> <p>1.2.5 Continue to strengthen agency relationships with Kern County Network for Children, local Community Based Organizations by attending collaborative meetings.</p>	<p>Completed November 2007. Incorporated into numerous policies as well as the SDM policy.</p> <p>Began 2000 and on going.</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Program Director, Social Service Supervisors, Social Service Workers</p>	
<p>Strategy 1.3 – Provide Differential Response (DR) Services to children and families who are at risk for experiencing child abuse or neglect.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: DR expands the ability of CPS to respond differently to suspected reports of child abuse and neglect, by assisting families at the first signs of trouble. Program data demonstrates that families who receive DR services are significantly less likely to be re-referred to CPS.</p>	
Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to	Assigned to
<p>1.3.1 During the projected/pilot year, provide known at-risk children and families with screening and information and referral services to assist them in accessing appropriate service providers in the community.</p>	<p>Completed January 2006 and ongoing</p>		<p>Kern County Network for Children, Family Resource Centers (FRCS), in partnership with community-based organizations and schools</p>

System Component Template

	<p>1.3.2 Provide DR case management services to families at risk of child abuse or neglect, using strengths-based, client-driven service plans.</p>		<p>Completed January 2006 and ongoing</p>		<p>Kern County Network for Children, Family Resource Centers, in partnership with community-based organizations and schools.</p>
	<p>Strategy 1.4 – Provide parent education services for parents whose children are at-risk of, or have experienced maltreatment.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Parent education, provided within a framework of other supportive services, is a research-based strategy to reduce child abuse/maltreatment.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.4.1 Refer parents to parenting instruction, utilizing qualified instructor(s) and CWS approved parenting curricula as defined by W&I Code Section 16507.7</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Neglect component added to all dept. approved providers of court ordered parenting as of 2007, but we have been certifying providers of WIC parenting since before 2000.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>CPS Staff</p>
	<p>Strategy 1.5 – Expand Team Decision Meetings (TDMs) and Family Decision Meetings (FDMs) to Emergency Response (ER).</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Use family and familiar team members to assist social workers in engaging clients to offer greater support and encourage self reliance.¹</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.5.1 Target geographical area for pilot project. 1.5.2 Assign TDMs and FDMs geographically. 1.5.3 Continue to train staff to conduct TDMs and FDMs in the field.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>We have removed these items from our SIP due to budgetary factors.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	
	<p>Strategy 1.6 – Develop Chronic Neglect Unit.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Chronic Neglect was identified in the CWLA Review as an area needing to be addressed.</p>		
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.6.1 Write a proposal to create the EASE (Engage, Assess, Serve and Empower) Unit. 1.6.2 EASE Unit case workers will provide intensive services from the beginning to the end of reunification services. 1.6.3 Train staff on chronic neglect through UC Davis module.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Completed February 2010. Although a small number of families were able to maintain their children in their homes, most of the cases in the pilot ended up in dependency court. In order for this type of intensive service to work, the agency must be staffed at a much higher staff to client ratio. Information gained from the pilot will be incorporated into to the best of</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Court Services Program Director</p>

System Component Template

<p>1.6.4</p>	<p>Establish and implement a chronic neglect unit; evaluate the effectiveness of program and report results at 6, 12, 18, and 24 month timeframes.</p>	<p>our ability in the one remaining VFM Unit. Due to budgetary factors, we have decreased the provision of VFM services down to one unit consisting of eight SSWs, down from a total of three units.</p>	
<p><u>Describe systemic changes needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u></p>			
<p>Child Welfare funding needed to support best practice caseload sizes.</p>			
<p>Continued collaboration with the courts to utilize non-custody petitions to strengthen efforts to reduce chronic neglect. Adequate funding to maintain staffing ratios needed for EASE intensive case management services. Development of electronic information system to track the outcomes of services provided to clients by multiple agencies.</p>			
<p><u>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</u></p>			
<p>Department and associated community resources for training, including funding for training activities.</p>			
<p><u>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</u></p>			
<p>Obtaining direct funding to establish and maintain a wider array of community services and resources.</p>			
<p>Kern County is utilizing an integrated, community-based, collaborative approach among public and private agencies for social service delivery. This approach has resulted in increased service accessibility and utilization rates. Families who fully utilize a coordinated plan of informal and formal support services are less likely to experience the recurrence of maltreatment.</p>			
<p><u>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</u></p>			
<p>None currently.</p>			

Outcome/Systemic Factor: C1.1 – Reunification within 12 months.

County's Current Performance: Kern County has a reunification rate of 63.4% for July 2008 – June 2009 and 63.5 % for October 2008 - September 2009. In July 2002, Kern's rate was 64.9%, while the National Standard was 75.2%, and California's rate was 63.9%.
Improvement Goal 2.0 – Kern has set the improvement goal to increase reunification by 3% over the next three years.

Strategy 2.1 – Provide intensive time-limited Family Reunification (FR) services to families at-risk of not completing their Reunification requirements.

Strategy Rationale²: Many families in need of FR services require intensive levels that are too demanding for social workers with large case loads. Program data demonstrates improved outcomes for families who receive intensive FR services. During FY 08-09, 90% of closed cases successfully completed court orders in preparation for reunification, and 87% of the families that received services were successfully reunified.

Milestone	2.1.1 Provide intensive case management, guided visitation, emergency funds, and support group services to families referred to the Time Flies! Program.	Timeframe	Services began July 2000 and are currently being provided but there are opportunities for increased utilization. Future efforts will depend on the availability of funds.	Assigned to	Haven Counseling and Family Services
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Strategy 2.2 – Include families in case planning to help ensure engagement.

Strategy Rationale¹: Families who feel they have input in decisions about their lives are more likely to engage in efforts to lower risk or safety factors.

Milestone	2.2.1 Develop a case plan policy (and appropriate tools) to identify methods for improving engagement skills at every point of a family's assessment. 2.2.3 Pilot Family Life Scale (FLS) in ER, Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM).	Timeframe	Completed first pilot in October 2008 through February 2009 in ER with VFM using the Family Life scale (FLS) and resource referral tool. Pilot revealed that having the VFM worker develop the case plan after case was transferred from ER did not work due to time lag from ER to VFM. FLS and referral tools are currently being revised and piloted in Court Intake.	Assigned to	Staff Development, Court Services Program Director CS Program Director
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² Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome.

System Component Template

	<p>2.2.4 Conduct Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) using new FLS and case plan engagement tools in Court Intake with clients at the Detention hearings.</p> <p>2.2.5 Continue to conduct PDSAs using new FLS and case plan engagement tools in Court Intake with clients at the Detention hearings.</p> <p>2.2.6 Develop policy and roll out mandatory training for the use of the FLS and Case Planning tools department wide.</p> <p>Strategy 2.3 – Join Casey Foundation on California Disproportionality Project.</p>	<p>First PDSA conducted in May 2010 using the Family Life Scale and case planning engagement tools in assessing and engaging clients at detention hearings. Tools revised and second PDSA completed June 2010. Feedback will be provided to the workgroup and the CWIC on June 17, and monthly until the use is implemented.</p> <p>May-October 2010</p> <p>November December 2010.</p>		<p>Staff Development, Court Services Program Director</p> <p>Staff Development, Court Services Program Director</p> <p>All CPS staff and Staff Development</p>
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>2.3.1 Attend Learning Session for project direction.</p> <p>2.3.2 Access Kern's data for decision points in current child welfare practice.</p> <p>2.3.3 Assess Kern's child welfare practices for internal cultural awareness, diversity and competence.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p> <p>Ongoing Work</p> <p>No single assessment was done, but several PDSA's were completed to assess CW practices: 1. IAP – review of practices and adverse effect to cohort, including Family Finding @ front end w/ target population of African American children beginning Dec of 2009. 2. Reporting pos-tox by</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Kern has a population of 5.4% African American. However, Kern has 12.4% allegations for abuse/neglect for that population and 11.6% of those are substantiated. African American children represent 6.2% in Kern Population, but 26.3% in foster care. American Indian children represent .5% of the population, but 1.4% in foster care.</p> <p>ERDD and the Child Welfare Implementation Committee (CWIC)</p> <p>ERDD and the Child Welfare Implementation Committee (CWIC)</p>

System Component Template

	community/medical staff and review of internal policies and practices. 3. Family Finding @ front end, implementation and review of practices from IAP.			
Strategy 2.4 – Expand TDMs within the Family Services Division for FR cases.	Strategy Rationale¹: Using family and familiar team members to shore up clients and their direction helps to engage clients and support reunification goals.			
2.4.1 Co-locate TDM staff within Child Welfare Services Programs.	Completed			
2.4.2 Continue to train staff to conduct TDMs and FDMs in the field.	Completed ongoing		Additional, Part-Time TDM facilitators trained	
Strategy 2.5 – Advocate for volunteers to assist and support parents throughout the reunification process.	Strategy rationale: parents who successfully completed the reunification process generally have a positive effect on parents who are currently in the system.			
2.5.1 Advocate for funding of parent mentors to ensure their work continues in Family Reunification. Seek and identify volunteers to assist biological parents to reunify with their children.	Will begin 2011 and on going	Timeframe	Family Services (FS) Program Director and Assistant Director of Child Protective Services.	
2.5.2 Canvas social workers for input as to possible mentors. Canvas social workers for the names of potential volunteers.	Will begin 2011 and on going		Assigned to	FS Social Workers, FS Program Specialist, and co-located TDM staff.
2.5.3 Contact possible mentors for participation. Contact potential volunteers for participation.	Will begin 2011 and on going			
Strategy 2.6 – Mental Health assessments, and the service needs identified through them, must happen sooner and reach more	Strategy Rationale¹ Children and families experience emotional trauma when children are removed from their home environment.			

System Component Template

children and families.		Mental health services must address this trauma while also working to eliminate risk and increase safety.	
Milestone 2.6.1 Form a committee to evaluate process for mental accessing health services. 2.6.2 Develop and implement mental health referral form. 2.6.3 Develop tracking method for mental health referrals and follow up monthly with the appropriate mental health staff. 2.6.4 Document services provided to children and families. 2.6.5 Judicial Standing Order in place to allow mental health screening of children ages 3 and above during 1 st 60 days of release from Jamison	Timeframe	Committee formed in 2008. Policy 600-012 issued October 2008 and revised March 2010.	Assigned to CPS staff and KCMH. Social Services Workers, Social Service Supervisors
		Completed March 11, 2010. Policy 600-012.	
		Completed before March of 2010. Follow up is ongoing.	
		Ongoing work since October 2008.	
		Completed 2007. Standing order number 2007-06.	
Strategy 2.7 – Develop policy and practice for parental incentives during reunification to measure progress at reaching case plan.	Timeframe	Strategy Rationale¹: This was identified as a need in the Judicial Focus Group in the PQCR.	
Milestone 2.7.1 Identify the process for measuring and rewarding a parent's progress toward achieving their case plan goals, incorporating the risk assessment tool. 2.7.2 Train all placement and court review staff in process and add a measurement to the supervisor's read sheet to ensure compliance and consistent adherence to policy.	Timeframe	Completed September 2009 Policy # 400-041.	Assigned to
		Completed October 2009.	
Strategy 2.8 – Make referrals for parents to Parent Project Classes. Probation has eliminated Parent Project due to the budget.		Strategy Rationale¹: Over the past two years, several Probation Officers have been trained to facilitate Parent Project classes. There have been some Parent Project classes geared directly towards parents with minors on probation. Families have also been referred to take part in the classes throughout the community. The dates of the classes can be located through www.kernparentproject.org. Increasing parenting skills will decrease the reunification time.	

System Component Template

		Unfortunately, due to budget issues, Probation Officers no longer have the ability to facilitate ART classes or Parent Project classes.		
Milestone	2.8.1 Identify available classes, their target population and the referral process workers must follow.	Timeframe	Completed (unknown date)	Assigned to Program Support Bureau staff Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS)
	2.8.2 Program Information listed in the DHS Resource Directory, along with web site URL by which staff can locate all information for this program.		Completed approximately two years ago- Program is listed in Resource directory as being managed by the KCSOS.	
	2.8.3 Provide staff with informal training and information to ensure staff knows the Parent Project's purpose and referral process.		September 2010 through March 2011 Removed to due Probation eliminating the Parent Project due to the lack of officers to facilitate classes.	
Strategy 2.9 – Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC).		Strategy Rationale¹: The MTFC program is an evidenced-based model developed out of the Oregon Social Learning Center. The main goal of the program is to reunify youth with biological or adoptive family members. This is a short-term (6-9months) program which focuses on the child's strengths, encourages normative and pro-social behaviors, supports academic development, and decreases conflict between family members.		
Milestone	2.9.1 Continue referring appropriate youth to MTFC.	Timeframe	Referrals began in 2004 and are ongoing	Assigned to Probation Placement Unit and DHS Placement Workers and MTFC Staff at DHS
	2.9.2 Request rate change for SCI for MTFC.		On hold pending budget outcome.	

System Component Template

<p>Milestone</p> <p>2.9.3 Supervisors monitor for consistency through case reads and discussions.</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Started 2004 and ongoing work</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Family Services and Permanent Placement Staff</p>
<p>Strategy 2.10 – Make referrals to SB163 Wraparound Program</p> <p>Strategy Rationale³: The SB 163 Wraparound Program is a collaborative effort between Probation, Mental Health, and a providing agency (Aspira-Bakersfield and North Kern or Family Preservation Services-Eastern Kern County and Taft). This program is designed specifically for minors at high risk of needing out of home placement/commitment program or for high risk minors returning home from out-of-home placement. This program provides intensive family services to maintain the minor in the home.</p>				
<p>Milestone</p> <p>2.10.1 Continue referrals to SB 163 Wraparound Program</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Referrals to WRAP were implemented in 2004 and referrals are continuing.</p>	<p>Assigned to</p>	<p>Probation Placement Unit and DHS Placement Staff</p>
<p><u>Describe systemic changes needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u></p> <p>Child Welfare funding needed to support best practice caseload sizes.</p> <p>The Kern County Departments of Human Services and Mental Health have identified ways to improve the referral and coordination of mental health services for children and families who enter the Child Welfare Services System. These changes are currently being implemented.</p> <p>Funding is needed to adequately staff Wraparound, to develop pay rates for MTFC, and to recruit MTFC homes. Update department policy to shift from referring youth to the SPP to placing them in MTFC homes with the Wraparound program. Explore feasibility of shifting funding from the SPP to MTFC placement program and incorporate in the state proposal to increase SCI payments/add MTFC rate(s).</p>				

³ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome.

System Component Template

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Funding is needed to train the TDM trainers and parent mentors, and for developing curriculum. Internal training as described above. Add Special Projects code in CWS/CMS and train staff in proper use.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Kern County Mental Health needs to continue collaboration with DHS to ensure adequate mental Health services are available and accessible for children and families. The Kern County Mental Health System of Care has identified ways to increase the timeliness and frequency of services for CWS children and families. Haven Counseling will continue to provide intensive case management, support, and guided visitation services for families. Juvenile Court orders should support expanded visitation and placing minors on extended visits with their parents.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

CDSS to approve SCI rate change for MTFC once submitted by the department.

System Component Template

Outcome/Systemic Factor: C4.3 – Placement Stability (for children who have been in care at least 24 months)

County's Current Performance: As of September 2008, Kern County's placement stability is 24.3% while the National Standard is 41.8%. Kern's baseline, as of June 2003 was 42.2% and California's current rate was 33.2%.

Improvement Goal 3.0 – Kern County will improve placement stability over the next three years by 5%.

Strategy 3.1 – Reduce the number of placements for youth who have been in care over 24 months.

Strategy Rationale⁴: This is an outcome that was identified by KCNC's governing board, during the CSA, as needing to be addressed. Further, multiple moves for our youth compound mental health and educational issues and delay problem resolution.

Milestone	Timeframe	Completed 2009 and 2010	Assigned to
3.1.1	Use Business Objects and Safe Measures to identify youth having two or more placements in care within 24 months	Completed 2009 and 2010	
3.1.2	Read cases of youth with more than four placements to identify main reasons for placement changes and need for services	Completed 2009 and 2010	
3.1.3	Prepare report for management to identify reasons for placement changes and possible actions for improved placement stability.	Completed Reported to KCNC Governing Board January 2009	
3.1.4	Prioritize recommendations for practice and implement.	October 2010	Child welfare services PDs
3.1.5	Develop MOU with all FFAs and include a goal of decreasing moves for children within the FF agency itself.	To be signed and completed by the end of September 2010.	Foster Parent Ombudsman, Hal Lockey PS, PP PD
Strategy 3.2 – Develop and implement the Immediate Assessment Process for relatives and non-relative extended family members (NREFM).		Strategy Rationale¹: Children placed with relatives or NREFMs are more likely to experience placement stability and less behavioral problems.	
Σ = 3.2.1			

⁴ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome.

System Component Template

<p>Purchase portable live scan machines</p>	<p>Completed December of 2008 and January of 2009. Purchased two portable machines. Unfortunately the two stationary machines were removed at the same time. So in effect the portable machines are not really portable. Cannot fund the purchase of additional machines at this time due to the budgetary crisis.</p>	<p>Child Welfare Staff from CPSB and PSB</p>
<p>3.2.2 Revise and implement Immediate Assessment Program to place children with relatives or NREFMs within 48 hours of detention.</p>	<p>Revised Oct 2009. PDSA to implement, revise, etc from Oct 2009 to Feb 2010. Full Implementation March 2010.</p>	
<p>3.2.3 Track referrals to the IAP for data regarding placements with Rel/NREFMs for the following: 1. How many applications have been submitted 2. How many children were placed with these rel/NREFMs. 3. Are these placements stable</p>	<p>October 2009 and ongoing</p>	<p>Data Unit and QA Unit and CWIC</p>
<p>3.2.4 Place SSW at JJC to conduct Family Finding to initiate IAP at Detention hearings.</p>	<p>On hold pending budget outcome</p>	
<p>3.2.5 Place Relative Application on county website with instructions for submitting.</p>	<p>Completed May 2010.</p>	<p>CWIC</p>
<p>3.2.6 Assign JCC staff to complete placement paperwork and CWS/CMS documentation for relative placements, complete and fax a referral to Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP), and complete a request for Kinship Emergency Funds if needed.</p>	<p>On hold pending budget outcome</p>	<p>CWIC</p>

System Component Template

<p>3.2.7 Enhance RAU coverage by permitting an assigned SSW in each RAU to begin work at 9 am.</p>	<p>Practiced since 2007. Currently, 2 lead SSWs are scheduled 7-3:30, 2 lead SSWs are scheduled 8:30-5:30, and 1 lead SSW scheduled 9-6:30. Others' schedules are staggered to ensure coverage: 7:30-4:30 and 8-5:30/6.</p>	<p>Relative Assessment Unit</p>
<p>Strategy 3.3- Stabilize placements by increasing supportive services to foster parents.</p> <p>3.3.1 Partner with Bakersfield College Foster Care and Kinship Education Program to create and conduct monthly support groups for foster parents.</p> <p>3.3.2 Review Current Respite Care Program. Review current policy and look at ways to enhance Respite Care Program.</p> <p>3.3.3 Recruit more Respite Care Homes.</p> <p>3.3.4 Provide more supports for caregivers caring for medically fragile children.</p> <p>3.3.5 Develop educational materials for caregivers for Medically Fragile Children.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale¹ Stabilize placements by increased support systems and available services for foster parents.</p> <p>Completed for Metro Bakersfield: September 2009 Ridgecrest: October 2009 Taft: September 2010</p> <p>Completed by RDS in April 2010.</p> <p>Completed Held - Respite home recruitment day: April 2010</p> <p>Completed and ongoing 1. Held Medically Fragile Foster Parent Trainings – February 2009 and September 2009.</p> <p>1. Completed Medically Fragile Resource Sheet in June 2009 2. Include Medically Fragile Information in Caregiver Resource Guide – September 2009</p>	<p>Assigned to</p> <p>Foster Care Ombudsman</p> <p>Foster Care Ombudsman</p> <p>RDS and Outreach</p> <p>FKCE, Public Health Nurses and RDS</p> <p>Public Health Nurses and RDS</p> <p>Foster Care Ombudsman</p>
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	

System Component Template

Strategy 3.4 – Hold TDMs prior to placement changes in Family Services and Permanent Placement.		Strategy Rationale ¹ : TDMs are evidence-informed practice for stabilizing placements.	
Milestone	3.4.1 Track TDM compliance rates and provide monthly reports to Program Directors.	Currently provided	TDM Staff and Family Services/Permanent Placement Program Directors
	3.4.2 Conduct a longitudinal case read to obtain local data on the impact of TDMs on placement stability.	Completed two QA reads; one in 2009 and another in 2010. Data showed for FS placements where the TDM decision was to save the placement, nearly one half of the placements disrupted within 60 days anyway. For PP placements, about one quarter of the placements disrupted within 60 days of the TDM. Based on the data, the effectiveness of TDM's will be monitored for the use in the future.	Assigned to
	3.4.3 Monitor follow-up on TDM action plans to assure the actions agreed upon are followed up and completed by all participants.	September 2010	Family Services/Permanent Placement Managers and Supervisors
Strategy 3.5 – Address runaway youth problem.		Strategy Rationale¹: The frequency of runaway youth increase the number of placements, delays the engagement of youth in problem resolution, and compounds mental health and educational issues.	
Milestone	3.5.1 Research runaway policies in other counties	Completed Strategic plan completed, and crisis intervention steps for SSWs outlined.	Yu Troung
	3.5.2 Implement the use of TDMs for runaway youth.	Postponed due to budgetary restrictions.	
	3.5.3 Utilize Family Finding for runaway youth.	On hold pending budget outcome.	

System Component Template

<p>Strategy 3.6 – Refer high-need youth to Special Multi-Agency Resource Team (SMART) committee early on for multi-agency involvement and intervention to prevent placement changes and/to higher levels of care.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Working to stabilize placements in this manner will help youth address their needs and focus on positive change.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>3.6.1 Refer youth to SMART committee at group home Level 7 instead of current practice to refer at higher level.</p>	<p>October 2010</p>	<p>Family Services, Permanent Placement, and Adoptions and Placement Social Workers</p>
	<p>3.6.2 Oversee and closely monitor the quality of services provided in level 10-14 group homes to ensure resources are available and accessed.</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>Hal Lockey</p>
<p>Strategy 3.7 – Pilot and Implement SDM Substitute Care Provider module</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Matching a youth's needs with an adequately evaluated placement may eliminate/reduce placement changes.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>3.7.1 Rollout training on module to licensing and relative assessment units.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
	<p>3.7.2 Rollout training on module to placement-social workers.</p>	<p>Removed until integrated into CMS.</p>	
	<p>3.7.3 Rollout training on module to ER.</p>	<p>Removed until integrated into CMS.</p>	
<p>Strategy 3.8 – Relocate annual and regular foster care recruiting events to targeted neighborhoods.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Children who remain in their own neighborhood have better stability rates, due to security and familiarity.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>3.8.1 Identify locations for recruitment venues.</p>	<p>July 2010 and July 2011</p>	<p>Recruitment, Development, Support (RDS)</p>
	<p>3.8.2 Conduct "Taking Care of Business" days as part of a recruitment plan in selected areas.</p>	<p>Assess whether events are cost effective and whether they have positive outcomes by October 2010.</p>	<p>RDS</p>
	<p>3.8.3 Increase Emergency Foster Homes in targeted areas.</p>	<p>July 2010 and July 2011</p>	<p>RDS</p>
<p>Strategy 3.9 – Decrease the number of children changing schools.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale¹: Placement stability is correlated with improved educational and life outcomes for foster children.</p>	
<p>3.9.1</p>			

System Component Template

	Timeline	2010 and 2011	
Develop school-based database.		Completed	Data Unit, CWIC and Placement Staff
3.9.2 Incorporate use of GIS mapping to identify available foster homes in the child's neighborhood of origin.		2010 and 2011	Data Unit
3.9.3 Enhance placement searches by adding school data to available foster home data, making available information on school districts and neighborhood of origin.		2010, Ongoing	CPS Managers and Supervisors
3.9.4 Ensure education notebooks in CWS/CMS are updated by staff regularly via Supervisor case reviews.		Completed	
3.9.5 Revise case read sheet to address Education Passport in Permanent Placement.		Completed for January-March 2010	Quality Assurance Unit
3.9.6 Conduct a Quality Assurance read targeting Education Passport.			
Strategy 3.10 – Stabilize placements by providing training on behavioral and health needs to foster parents and staff.			
Milestone	Timeframe		
3.10.1 Use Foster Parent Association meeting as venue for mental health training via Bakersfield College Foster Care and Kinship Education Program (BC-FCKE) by contracting with KC Mental Health to provide mental and behavioral health training.	Completed June 2010. Scheduled to be ongoing through BC-FCKE program in FY 2010-2011.	Assigned to	Mental Health staff, BC-FCKE, and Foster Care Ombudsman
3.10.2 Train staff and foster parents on differentiating between behavioral issues related to child development and behaviors that indicate a need for mental health services.	2011 training year curriculum of the BC-FCKE program will include this subject.		Mental Health staff, BC-FCKE, and Foster Care Ombudsman

System Component Template

<p>3.10.3 Train staff and foster parents on the impact of grief and loss/attachment impacts based on the 3-5-7 model.</p>	<p>Removal due to budgetary restrictions</p>	
<p>Strategy 3.11 – Provide education-related and supportive services to improve academic success of participating foster and group home youth.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale Program data demonstrates that foster youth who receive Foster Youth Services (FYS) experience fewer placements and better educational outcomes.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>3.11.1 Provide FYS that include educational: advocacy, liaison, case management, tutoring, mentoring, transition and emancipation assistance, Post – Secondary Education and or Workforce Training Services and linkages to services.</p>	<p>Completed January 2006 and ongoing</p> <p>Assigned to Kern County Superintendent of Schools</p>
<p>Strategy 3.12 – Recruit, develop and train foster parents on Teen/Youth Crisis Resolution.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale Educate staff and foster parents on youth’s unique needs and behaviors; provide temporary homes for a “cooling off period” for foster youth and foster parents to support placement stability.</p>	
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>3.12.1 Recruit Crisis Respite Homes.</p> <p>3.12.2 Develop curriculum for training foster parents.</p> <p>3.12.3 Develop policy and procedures.</p> <p>3.12.4 Provide training to foster parents and staff.</p>	<p>Removed due to budgetary restrictions.</p> <p>Assigned to</p>
<p>Strategy 3.13 – Continued Aggression Replacement Training (ART)</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale : Some Probation staff has completed facilitator training for ART. Teaching and modeling appropriate actions and reactions, while modeling positive behaviors decrease the likelihood of unstable behaviors in school and in placements, decreasing the likelihood of education and placement changes. <u>Unfortunately, due to budget issues, Probation Officers no longer have the ability to facilitate ART classes or Parent Project Classes.</u></p>	

System Component Template

Milestone	3.13.1 Continue Aggression Replacement Training (ART)	Timeframe	Suspended indefinitely due to budget.	Assigned to	Probation
	3.13.2 Continue Recovery Activities Program		On-going		
	3.13.3 Continue Parent Education Program		Suspended indefinitely due to budget.		
Strategy 3.14 – Train Probation Officers assigned to Placement Unit in Probation Department to understand Division 31 mandates.					
Milestone	3.14.1 Coordinate Placement Officer Core training for four Officers	Timeframe	Summer 2009	Assigned to	Probation Supervisor and Placement Officers
	3.14.2 Complete Placement Officer Core training		Completed January 2010		
	3.14.3 Monitor performance		Ongoing		
Strategy 3.15 – Increase Probation referrals and placements with Foster Family Agency (FFA)s.					
Milestone	3.15.1 Continue seeking FFA homes for Probation youth	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Probation Supervisor and Placement Officers
	3.15.2 Identify appropriate youth for placement		Ongoing		
	Strategy 3.16 – Improve communication between Probation and Child Welfare staff when placing minors in Foster Family Homes (FFH)s, pending capability to share information in CWS/CMS.		Strategy Rationale : Placement stability in FFHs relies on mutual understanding of the child's needs and the licensee's abilities to accept placements. Probation and Licensing must discuss any restrictions before finalizing a FFH placement.		
3.16.1					

System Component Template

<p>Research and implement allowing Probation placements to be recorded into the CWS/CMS statewide system.</p> <p>3.16.2</p> <p>Develop a review process for staffing potential placements by Probation in FFHs to prevent license violations.</p>	<p>October 1, 2010 Meeting has been arranged for May 12th to begin process.</p> <p>December 2009- Informal process put in place consisting of telephone calls between CPS and Probation staff. Probation will contact Licensing Supervisor before placing a Ward in a FFH to discuss minor's restrictions and needs vs. FFH's ability to take placement. But no calls to LS have been received since before 2009.</p>	<p>Staff Development, CWS Administrator, ICS and Probation Placement Supervisors</p> <p>No assignment has been officially made regarding developing this process, which would include a CPS component to ensure communication between all involved.</p>
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Describe systemic changes needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

Child Welfare funding needed to support best practice caseload sizes.

Placement searches focus on finding and placing with relatives/NREFMs. Provide resources and support to caregivers for placement stability. Allow and provide Probation Department staff full access to the CWS/CMS. Streamline referrals to the SMART Committee. Enhance staff's involvement in multi-agency plans. Establish methods to exchange information between the County Foster Care System and the various School Districts in Kern County. Add school data field to the Foster Home Placement Pages in CWS/CMS. Increase foster parent commitment to older youth with mental health and behavioral issues. Develop recruitment efforts for respite and other specialized foster parents to attract retired professionals, educators, etc. Funding is needed for Probation to sustain special programs including Early Intervention Program. Encourage Probation Supervisors to develop a rapport with the Licensing Supervisor and have placement discussions to prevent FFH licensee violations

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Training needs as identified above. Educate staff about Family Notification and Finding at initial intake to reduce the need for CPS involvement. Develop quick reference guide on runaway procedures. Train staff on using SDM to better assess risk for older youth. CDSS to train Probation staff on Division 31 and Title 22 regulations regarding placement of foster children in out-of-home care and sharing of information necessary to place in FFH's.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

SMART Committee members assess child(ren) for the appropriate level of placement and ensure that resources are being fully utilized. Mental Health and Probation to collaborate. Engage school district personnel in the exchange of information. KCSOS FYS program works closely with school districts throughout Kern County to provide training regarding the educational rights of foster youth to ensure foster youth receive the educational services needed for academic success, and to provide a range of advocacy and support services to foster youth. FYS program data

System Component Template

demonstrates that foster youth who receive educational support and advocacy services experience fewer placement changes. External training providers need to maintain capacity to provide new and refresher training to support Probation youth needs.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

Placement stability measure needs revision to reflect moves to a lower level of care or moves to unify siblings as positive outcomes, as well as addressing the temporary placement of a child in a shelter or with a relative/NREFM. AB 298, effective w/ ACL 09-09 – Relative Caregivers and Permanency Options; AB 2195, effective w/ ACL 07-39, Temporary Placement of Foster Child w/ Relative/Non-Related Extended Family Member in an Emergency Situation. Regulatory changes may be necessary to allow the exchange of information between child welfare and probation